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National Smokejumper Association

LeRoy Cook

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THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
APRIL 2011

SMOKEJUMPER

| | |
|--|----|
| Jerry Dixon, the Dancing Never Stopped | 14 |
| USFS Evaluates Ram-Air Canopies..... | 21 |
| They Flew to Save James Bond | 24 |

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Message from the President..... | 2 |
| Cave Junction Wineries..... | 3 |
| Gobi Restoration Project, 2010..... | 5 |
| Incident Over Elk City..... | 6 |
| Inside the Grand Canyon..... | 8 |
| The Story Behind the Cover Photo..... | 11 |
| Sounding Off from the Editor..... | 12 |
| For Jerry Dixon, the Dancing Never Stopped..... | 14 |
| Minnesota Trail Project, 2010..... | 16 |
| Off the List..... | 19 |
| Wings of an Eagle..... | 20 |
| Forest Service Evaluates Ram-Air Canopies..... | 21 |
| Good Camaraderie, Satisfying Work Overcomes Paddling Against the Wind..... | 22 |
| They Flew to Save James Bond..... | 24 |
| Odds and Ends..... | 26 |
| VA Lists Presumptive Conditions for Claims..... | 29 |
| Rookie Finds He Has The Stomach for Jumping..... | 30 |
| The View from Outside the Fence..... | 32 |



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(Courtesy Mark Lewis (LGD-75). See page 11 for more about the photo.



Message from the President



by John Twiss
(Redmond '67)
PRESIDENT

AS WINTER PASSES and another fresh spring comes our way, I am reflecting on the NSA Website Obituary Column and "the ones the wolves brought down." It is particularly hard for me to see smokejumpers that I knew and jumped with on that list. I will always picture them young, tough and indestructible, unable to die from disease or natural causes. We were smokejumpers, and we were sure that old age would never catch up with us. Hell, we would likely die jumping out of airplanes or falling off a mountain.

The NSA Obituaries cause me to think about the original smokejumpers, like the late **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) and **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40), and the procedures, attitude and sense of pride they instilled in all of us who followed. They not only pioneered parachute delivery of men to backcountry fires, they left a good legacy in the Forest Service and set the standards that still shape smokejumping 70 years later!

My smokejumper supervisors at the Redmond Air Center

were World War II and Korean War era smokejumpers. Hard working, bright, no nonsense guys that treated you fairly and expected you to perform. **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46), the late **Hal Weinmann** (NCSB-47), **Tony Percival** (NCSB-54), and the late **David "Skinny" Beals** (MYC-45) shaped my attitude about work, safety, ethics, treatment of people and approach to life. They didn't know it, but I watched every move that they made and everything that they did. They led by example, and I owe each of them for their care and interest.

Jim Allen, a WWII vet, shaped my approach to leadership. He was soft-spoken (a trait I could never master), direct, always saw the big picture, and cared deeply about people. Oh, how I hated to face him after my latest escapade in town or screw-up at the base. He only had to look at me and I knew I had disappointed him again. I was a difficult pupil, but thankfully he was patient.

I hate to read the NSA Obituaries. It brings great sadness, but I will keep looking at the column to remember the exceptional people that I worked with, the adventures we had together, the great leaders, and to remember just who shaped my life. 🕒

Cave Junction Wineries

by Ron Thoreson (Cave Junction '60)

Last September my wife, Joyce, and I journeyed to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota for a week as part of the smokejumper trails program. Jim Cherry organized this project, which also included Chuck and KG Sheley. During our week Chuck and I reminisced about the changes we'd seen in our lifetime and agreed we were in serious danger of getting old! Amongst the changes we noted was

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Anchorage..... ANC | Grangeville GAC | MissoulaMSO |
| Boise NIFC | Idaho City IDC | ReddingRDD |
| Cave Junction CJ | La Grande..... LGD | Redmond.....RAC |
| Fairbanks FBX | McCall.....MYC | West Yellowstone WYS |
| | | Winthrop..... NCSB |

that Missoula, which was once a railroad/ranching town with a small university, now claims more writers and artists in residence per capita than any other city in the world! And Cave Junction, which was just a small logging and Forest Service town, now has some sophisticated, successful wineries with national and international distribution and renown. I agreed to research a bit and try to write an article about Cave Junction's wineries and any links to the jumper base there. It turns out that one of those wineries, Foris, not only has some interesting links to the Cave Junction jumper base, but to Chuck himself. And now for the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey used to say.

First, let me establish my creds as a wine critic. A connoisseur I am not. In the foody world I'd be classed as a gourmand, not a gourmet. I like most all dry wines, particularly reds, and some more than others.

When I grew up in the 50s, I liked to hang out with my Italian and Mexican friends who had the civilized notion of drinking wine with dinner, since Norwegians weren't all that keen on their kids drinking wine anytime.

In 1961 I bummed around Europe for six months. One of the fun things was carrying your own wine bottle and refilling it with vin ordinaire at the local wine shops as you traveled. Aging of these wines was not recommended, as they turned to vinegar in a day or less!

In my lifetime I've seen US wines go from being little recognized or appreciated to international renown. The turning point was the blind wine tasting which has gone into legend as the Judgement of Paris in 1976 when Napa Valley wines won both the red and white classes. The 1973 Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon won for red and the 1973 Chateau Montelena won for white over French wines from chateaus with centuries of experience and crusty fame. Following this shock to the French, Julio Gallo was less than gracious and said it was no wonder that the Euros raved about their occasional good vintage since the FDA wouldn't let our average wines be fed to our hogs (no doubt referring to the vin ordinaire that I had been slurping up).

At a Cave Junction reunion about ten years ago, I was amazed and pleased to sample Foris wines from Cave Junction. The winery had contributed several bottles of their Fly Over labeled wines for our reunion

barbecue. Foris makes Fly Over White and Fly Over Red, which are blended wines with the distinctive label of a single engine plane flying over some soaring evergreens. Folks at our reunion quickly drew in a parachute coming down to cement the fact that we saw the label as an homage to the old jumper base.

When I began to research the wine article, I got in touch with Ted Gerber, the founder of the Foris winery. He quickly disabused me of the notion that the Fly Over wines were an homage to the jumper base. He said he'd also heard folks say that the label was a tribute to the DEA marijuana planes that cruise the area, which was also wrong. Ted said the Fly Over label was intended to be a stick in the eye of the wine aficionados who thought that good wine ended at the Napa/ Sonoma area of California and didn't begin again until the Willamette Valley of Oregon; hence they simply 'flew over' the Siskiyou in transit between the two 'real' wine areas.

Ted said there was a true connection between Foris and the jumper base, but that connection was with the daily weather records which had been maintained at the jumper base (and before that the Cave Junction ranger station). The conventional thinking had been that the Siskiyou could not support successful vineyards because they were too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. The Forest Service weather records convinced Ted that the conventional thinking was wrong.

Having disillusioned me about the jumper base connection with Foris, Ted said he and his brother, Jim, did indeed have a connection with Chuck Sheley. They had both been on Chico High School (California) track teams coached by Chuck! Ted and Jim had graduated from Chico in 1965 and 1968, respectively.

Jim went on to be a jumper at Redding while working his way through college, got a PhD, has written several books, and is now a consultant to several governments as well as an economics professor at San Diego State.

Ted graduated from Cal State Hayward in 1969. He said he then went to work in a factory where they made wine bottles and got involved in making wine at home. After just two years in this 'school of hard knocks', Ted resolved to make the wine industry his life's work and bought his first property at Cave Junction in 1971.

In the ensuing years he and his family bought an additional four plots of land. They now own 399 acres, of which 173 are planted in grapes. The original property is called the Gerber home ranch and is the site of the tasting room. It's a short drive up the

Oregon Caves Highway out of Cave Junction and easy to find.

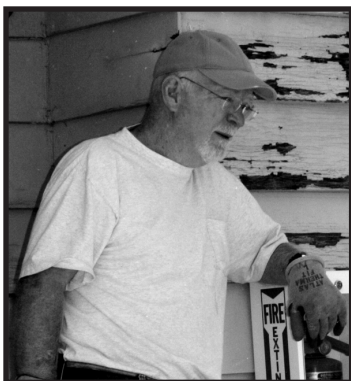
For the first ten years, Ted and his family sold their grapes to other vintners. Then in 1986 they began to produce their own wine under the Foris label. That was the same year that another winery, Bridgeview, began production in Cave Junction. Bridgeview is located in the same area as Foris' home vineyard and has a large production, including wines which catch your eye like a blue-bottled Blue Moon Reisling. Foris now has distributors in 40 states, and both Foris and Bridgeview have some international distribution.

In 2006, Bryan Wilson joined Foris as their winemaker. Bryan has a distinguished background, including working for the legendary Warren Winiarski at Stags Leap Vineyard in Napa. Winiarski is the man who, as much as anyone, put US wines on the international map by making the 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon wine that won the 1976 Judgement of Paris I earlier cited. Bryan and Ted describe their wines style as 'elegant', which they define as trying to highlight the fruit that they work so hard to grow while not messing it up with too much tinkering.

Oregon's wine industry is still growing, with some 400 wineries now when there were only 13 when Ted Gerber started Foris. In my humble opinion, Foris produces some of the best wine values to be found. Their Fly Over label blends are an excellent accompaniment to meals, and their Maple Ranch pinot noir is as good an American style pinot noir as I have found, at half the price of more touted wineries.

A Wall Street Journal review in 2006 said Foris' pinot noir was the best buy in Oregon. I asked Ted how they could stay alive in such a competitive industry. He quoted one wine writer who had visited their facility as saying they were "...short on glitz, but worth the trip." He said the wealthy folks who get into the wine business for the romance of it rather than profit are indeed hard to compete with, and added that he and other vintners who make a living in the business say there's no romance in wine until it's in the glass. Foris doesn't put their money into big tasting rooms and grounds; they invest in the land and the quality of the product.

There are now three generations of the Gerber family working in the Foris winery, and Ted's vision for the future is continued success. Having enjoyed their wines since my discovery of them about ten years ago, I certainly hope so. I urge *Smokejumper* readers to give them a try at one of your local wine dealers or via the internet at Foris' web site. And maybe one day they will do a label that is a true homage to the old Cave Junction jumper base. 🍷



Wes Brown (CJ-66)



Troop Emonds (CJ-66)



Terry Egan (CJ-65)



Gobi Restoration Project 2010

Photo's Courtesy Roger Brandt



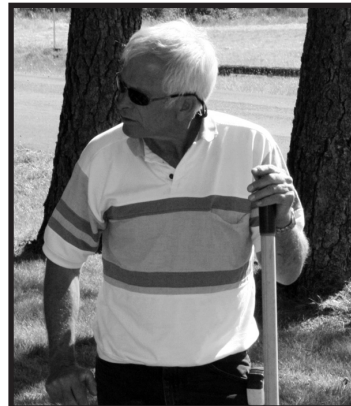
Restoration Crew



Chris Matthews



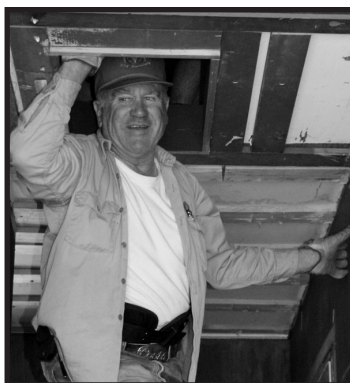
Sue Williams



Harold Hartman (CJ-65)



Mike Hardy (MYC-75)



Jim Lancaster (MYC-62)



Tom Hunnicutt (RDD-78)

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

More photos on page 28

Incident Over Elk City

by Ted Nyquest (Missoula '54)

In Grangeville, Idaho, Sept. 9, 1963 at the smoke-jumper base, foreman Tom Uphill readied the eight-man jumper request and map case for the Trilby Lakes Fire. The smokejumper base, referred to as the "loft," consisted of sleeping barracks for 16 jumpers, a small dispatch office, parachute loft, and gear storage, all in a small, white frame building at the airport.

Ford Trimotor NC7861 was parked within yards of the front door. Tom speculated that the fire had smoldered among the high rocks and sparse fuels at length before flaring up. Trilby Lakes is located high in the Sabe Creek drainage of the Nez Perce National Forest and the creek flows about 10 miles south into the Salmon River.

The first eight jumpers – **Dave Bennett** (MSO-61), **Tom Schroeder** (MSO-60), **Dave Lancaster** (MSO-63), **John Scott** (MSO-63), **Barry Robinson** (MSO-61), **Richard McElroy** (MSO-62), **Dave Hess** (MSO-63) and **Bill Locklear** (MSO-63) – were assigned from the rotating jump list and immediately began to suit up. I was to be the spotter and so I studied the large, mosaic wall map in the office, then began to assist the jumpers in attaching their main and emergency parachute packs.

Pilot Frank Borgeson started up the No. 1 and No. 2 engines of the Ford, and after we entered, he fired the No. 3 right engine next to the fuselage doorway. This was a process of activating the electric starter motor, which wound up with a high-pitched whine, finally reaching momentum to engage and start the engine. It was always accompanied by 10 seconds of hacking and irregular firing, a swirl of pungent, white exhaust smoke, mixed with the smell of raw gas.

Shortly, we began rolling down the taxiway. The Ford Trimotor, like most tail-draggers, was rather awkward on the ground with the fuselage at a steep, uncomfortable angle. Further, a stifling runway heat built up for jumpers in full gear.

Reaching the end of the runway, Frank ran through a short preflight check and taxied into takeoff position. He grasped the brake handle with his right hand and then put his left forearm over the control wheel, drawing it back while extending his left hand to thrust full throttle. The tail bobbed slightly when we surged forward, and the engines created a great roaring, vibrating, unsynchronous beat of noise.



Barry Robinson with prop. (Courtesy T. Nyquist)

I checked my watch and recorded takeoff time at 1415 hours (2:15 p.m.) in my pocket diary, aware of our efforts to reduce elapsed time from fire request to takeoff. The tail came up, leveling the fuselage; then we lifted off with a cooler breeze quickly improving the comfort level as helmets came off.

The Ford Trimotor was a slow, lumbering, huge-winged, corrugated metal beast dubbed "The Tin Goose." Normal cruise speed was close to 100 mph. The sound in flight was utterly distinctive and immediately recognized by every jumper within earshot.

I glanced back from the co-pilot's seat to see the tidy patchwork of yellow and green Camas Prairie grain fields fading from view. Ahead lay the rugged, forested Nez Perce National Forest as we slowly gained altitude and crossed over the South Fork of the Clearwater River and headed directly toward Elk City, an old mining town.

One of the more difficult jobs of a spotter in those days was to always know your location. I felt increasingly confident in this due to accumulating experience and Frank's excellent knowledge of the area. As we approached the Elk City checkpoint, a slight turn to the south would put us in line with Trilby Lakes. Some of the jumpers were dozing while others watched the terrain.

Then, a sudden, abrupt, startling explosion shook the aircraft-

Then, a sudden, abrupt, startling explosion shook the aircraft, followed by a choking cloud of hay dust

dislodged from all the nooks and cracks of the fuselage. The dust had been deposited by transporting bailed hay into Moose Creek Wilderness Station. The cloud cleared itself quickly, and I noticed my left hand was bleeding from a piece of shrapnel up from the floor.

Our attention was captured immediately by a violent, noisy shaking of the entire aircraft, as if inside a jackhammer. It seemed to come from No. 3, the right-side engine, and as I glanced out the window, searching for some understanding of what was happening, I noticed the forward engine cowling coming loose, thrusting itself into the propeller with a shower of sparks.

This repeated itself several times as the whole engine slowly shook loose from its mountings and gradually arched downward, but remained retained to the wing. My alarm increased as I saw the exposed fuel line break, spraying fuel over the rear of the engine and into the slipstream.

Frank's full attention was focused on recovering control and trim of the aircraft. I shouted over the noise and motioned toward the severed fuel line. He reached behind me to a small valve while I turned for a quick look at the jumpers. They had abandoned all protocols of command and control, and I saw the last three jumpers exiting the doorway. A helmet rolled into their traffic and was kicked aside, but went out the door ahead of the last jumper.

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Bennett had witnessed several metal parts fly by the door. Scott heard someone shout, "We're going down! Get out! Get out!" Schroeder and Bennett assisted each other hooking up static lines, then began their exits.

Bennett's wild ride was not over as he glanced back to see the Ford gently bank to the north, with a trail of gas vapor spewing behind as he descended. He hung up in a tree briefly, but caught a foot strap on a dry limb, and swung around to hang upside-down as his parachute collapsed. He suddenly broke free, falling end over end, grasping for branches; then his parachute caught on limbs and he landed upright and safe.

Scott hung up, did a rope letdown, then placed an orange crepe "L" to signal "jumper okay." Lancaster and Schroeder left their helmets behind. Several of the jumpers found their gloves on top of their emergency parachute packs as they descended.

The spray of gas subsided; the engine folded further down, then completely wrenched itself free and fell away. I noticed the newly exposed sublayer of our right front tire. The propeller must have chopped the rubber off the tire. Apparently, the prop contact with the wheel was the final assault that broke the engine free.

I strode back to the overhead rack and took down my spotter's emergency parachute and buckled the snaps, then glanced back toward the cabin. Frank was looking directly at me, face ashen, eyes large, as he gave a commanding, imploring shout: "Move the gear back!"

My decision was automatic, instinctual, and took perhaps two seconds. The spotter pack came off and I pulled the twisted mass of static lines back inside the plane, moved some gear toward the rear and then jumped back into the co-pilot's right seat. The noise and vibration had ceased and Frank was frantically preparing for a landing at a small airstrip surrounded by a busy sawmill and log yard.

I seized the "air net" microphone, which was reserved for all aircraft operations throughout Region 1, and with deliberate composure said, "Grangeville Jump Base, this is Ford 61."

Foreman Uphill answered, "This is Grangeville Jump Base, hold one." I did not know that a weather forecast was being broadcast from the Nez Perce National Forest supervisor's office at the same time. I repeated the call, with no answer. I turned to the "Forest Net," a frequency used by all work stations and vehicles on the forest. "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. This is Ford 61. We've lost an engine. All jumpers have bailed out. Will try to land at Elk City."

Frank was gauging his altitude and completing the first portion of a 270-degree turn for our one chance approach and landing at the log yard strip. After completing 180 degrees, I was amazed to see a Forest Service vehicle stopped, with the door open, and the driver running for the airstrip with the car fire extinguisher in hand. He had acted immediately after hearing us overhead and the Mayday transmission on his radio.

We came in low on the two remaining engines, just over the driver's head and barely cleared a barbed wire fence. We touched down to an immediate, violent bursting of the right tire, coasted very shortly, then ground-looped on top of the distorted, blown-out remnants of the right tire.

A momentary silence ensued; then Frank and I grabbed and shook each other by the shoulders in joy, just long enough to realize that danger and uncertainty were still hanging heavily in the tilting Trimotor. We ran out the door and stood staring from a short distance,

still grasping for some reason and understanding.

Our restraint was short-lived as we cautiously approached – then began intently inspecting – first the gaping, vacant hole where the missing engine had once been positioned, then a sharp, elongated 9-inch cut entering near the bottom of the fuselage just behind the cockpit seats.

On the opposite side of the fuselage, but higher up on the wall, another hole of the same dimensions showed evidence an object had exited. It subsequently hit the woven wire cables that control the tail, forming sharp V-shaped creases in the cable. Frank then came to the realization that a piece of the propeller had broken off and flown through the airplane with explosive force.

Further inspection revealed the piece had continued its rising angle to cut completely through the left wing, leaving a small indentation 1 inch long and half an inch deep in the wing fuel tank – but not enough to create a hole.

Locklear was the last jumper to exit the Trimotor and could see where we had landed, so steered his parachute very close to the landing site. Soon a mill yard employee and operator of a log transporting machine arrived to tell us his observations of seeing the plane's engine fall into a mud bank of the creek, creating an impressive crater near his machine.

The Nez Perce Forest supervisor, John Milodragovich, arrived en route to Grangeville, having seen the Ford and wondered why it had landed on the American River Sawmill airstrip. He found pieces of the Trimotor's engine on the road.

Gradually, the jumpers arrived at the airstrip with their gear. They inspected the plane, then Locklear stated that he had been sitting on the chain saw box, but moments before the explosion had moved in front of the box and leaned against it, inches from the prop fragment's path. This fortuitous move likely spared his life.

This fortuitous move likely spared his life.

A powerful elation and relief settled over us as we began to comprehend our good fortune. I place all due credit with Frank Borgeson for the skillful piloting of the disabled Trimotor under great duress.

We ate dinner in Elk City and had a warm summer night's ride back to Grangeville with time to ponder the hard-to-imagine twists of fate and fortune. Schroeder pulled out a rum-soaked Crook Cigar with some pomp and circumstance and said, "I smoke one of these when things are going my way." 🍷

Inside The Grand Canyon

by Roland Pera (Missoula '56)

On May 26, armed with a stuffed backpack, I boarded a plane headed for the sin city of Las Vegas. Not wishing to be corrupted in any way, I immediately rented a car and drove to Hurricane, Utah, about 30 miles from Zion National Park. Lodging here is much less expensive than staying in Springdale, which borders the park.

I have been in quite a few of the national parks, and I really think that Zion is my favorite. The towering, brightly colored peaks rise 3,000 feet perpendicularly and spectacularly out of Zion Canyon toward a blue sky. The mountains range in color from cream, to pink, to bright red. Three of the peaks that are near each other are named "Court of the Patriarchs," one being Abraham, and the other two are Isaac and Jacob.

One of the popular hikes in the park is "Angel's Landing." It is about a three-hour round-trip hike that rises about 1,500 vertical feet. The first two-thirds is a good

trail; however, the last part of the hike is not for the faint of heart as the trail traverses a very narrow ridge. There are chains to hold on to which actually makes it quite safe, but most of the people stop where the chains start. It's an interesting hike with a great view.

When in Zion be sure to drive a very scenic road that winds its way out of Zion Canyon, goes through a long tunnel and heads toward Bryce Canyon National Park.

If you have not been to Zion, put it on your bucket list. The park is only two and one-half hours from the city of transgression. The drive from Las Vegas to Zion passes through a very rugged canyon called the "Virgin River Canyon," so it is not a boring drive.

After a wonderful day in Zion I returned to Las Vegas and joined my traveling partner, J.B., of smokejumper ilk. J.B. and I trained together for the smokejumpers in 1956. I didn't talk to him much in those days since I couldn't understand his Mississippi accent. These days

about half of the accent is gone. He hails from San Antonio and Breckenridge, Colo.

Our hotel was very close to "The Strip." It was mid-afternoon and we hadn't had lunch. I opened my mouth and said, "There's the MGM Grand; I am guessing we can find something to eat there."

We found the coffee house, were seated and parsed the menu: hamburger, \$19.75; chicken club sandwich, \$18.50; etc. We quickly decided to go somewhere else.

Early the next morning 15 of us, or so, boarded a chartered bus for Lee's Ferry, Ariz., which is in Marble Canyon. This is designated as Mile Marker One on the Colorado River as it begins its journey through the Grand Canyon. From this point for a couple hundred miles downriver, it is impossible to drive to the river.

We arrived about noon and were greeted by seven guides from Arizona River Runners. We quickly noticed seven heavily loaded, oar-powered rubber rafts which would be our daytime homes on the water for the next five and one-half days. We changed clothes, went through a brief orientation and boarded the boats. Our 87-mile river journey had begun.

The guides sat in the center of the boat and were in complete charge of the rowing. Six of the rubber rafts carried passengers and cargo and one boat carried cargo only. We traveled for an hour, then pulled up to a sandy beach and had lunch. It was amazing how quickly the crew could set up a few tables, get sandwich stuff ready and make a salad. The food was always good.

The day was perfect and the scenery was spectacular. Around 5 p.m., our captain, Jimmi, who was in the lead boat, pulled up to a sandy beach which was to be our camp for the night. The passengers helped the guides unload the necessary items and soon the camp took shape. Needless to say, the guides are incredibly well-organized and efficient. While the crew worked on dinner, it was time for the guests to either make a stab at cleaning up in the river, find a sleeping place, or find the cold beer. The beer is chilled by the river, which is always cold. The water temperature is somewhere around 55 degrees. Our delicious dinner that night was salmon steak, rice, and broccoli.

What about the sleeping routine? The boats did carry tents, but we did not use them as the weather was warm and no rain was ever in sight. We all were furnished a piece of canvas to lay on the ground, a mat which served as a mattress, a sheet to put on the mat, a sleeping bag, and a pillow. The sand was soft, so the beds were reasonably comfortable. However, it was hard to keep the sand out of your bed.

The camping areas were large enough where we could spread out. I think everyone tried rather hard to find a "good place" to bed down. The first two nights there was

a glorious full moon visible to us. The other nights it was very dark in the canyons.

By 5:30 to 5:45 a.m., the crew was stirring and soon the loud announcement was given, "COFFEE'S READY!" The breakfasts were sumptuous – pancakes, eggs made to order, bacon, sausage, fruit, etc. Usually by 8 to 8:30 the camp had been taken down, the boats were loaded, and it would be time to hit the river.

In the morning most people wore their rain gear (with the exception of J.B., who did not bring any). Getting wet going through the rapids can be a cold activity in the morning. By late morning and in the afternoon, most of us took the rain gear off and did not mind getting wet.

We were a party of 23 along with seven guides. Each boat had four persons plus the guides. Sitting in the front of the boat literally guaranteed getting wet when passing through the rapids, although being in the back certainly did not guarantee one from not getting wet. Sometimes the boats went through at least part of the rapids going backward.

How did the rafting company keep things such as the bedding dry? Everyone was provided with two good-sized waterproof bags, one for our bedding and one for the bulk of our items. In addition, everyone was also furnished a smaller waterproof bag, which was our day bag. This bag housed anything we might need on that day, such as suntan lotion, etc. It was important that all the bags were always secured in the boats.

I had some major misconceptions about the river. One, I was surprised how the river was very still, very lazy, appearing much like a lake in many places. The next one was that it was much deeper than I expected. One book said that it was as deep as 90 feet in places, although most of the time 10 or 20 feet was a rough average.

I had seen so many pictures of the river being muddy. This was certainly not the case on this trip as the water was green and quite clean.

More on running the rapids – I will guess that we went through at least 50 rapids on our 87-mile journey, some obviously more wild than others. The unique thing about the rapids is that you can hear them before you can see them.

Before entering the turbulent water, the guide warns everyone to make sure they are sitting and holding on. Upon hitting the rapids, there is a lot of yelling, the boat gets pitched wildly about, and almost everyone gets wet. Usually it takes less than a minute to get through the worst part of each rapids. Very exhilarating!

We were told all along that the "big one," the Hance Rapids, would come on the last day. There was a place to beach the boats, climb a hundred feet and scout the rapids, which we did. It was quite an impressive sight.

The crew planned their navigation strategy from

that observation point. I do wonder a little bit if they purposely stopped to make the whole episode even more dramatic. The irony was that the Hance Rapids were scary, but we went through a wilder one about a half-hour later.

Is it boring to ride in the boat all day long? I suppose at times it gets a little tedious, but every turn and twist in the river presents a new vista, a different rock formation, etc. Watching for bighorn sheep and Merganser ducks also presents a diversion.

The guides seem to pride themselves in geologically explaining all of the rock formations. In some places the canyon is rather wide and in some places it is narrow. For the first three days most of the bluffs were flat on the top. By the last day we were in the gorge where the rock rose in all sorts of shapes.

The difference between a gorge and canyon is thus: a canyon is wider than it is deep and a gorge is deeper than it is wide.

Also to give us some exercise, and possibly to avoid

boredom, we did go on a hike almost every day – including one where we climbed about 700 feet and ended at a pool hidden between some large boulders. Also in the area of relieving boredom, there were many water fights among the boats. Twelve-year-old Austin was the main perpetrator.

I already mentioned the quality of the food. The second night we had pork chops, the third night was chicken cordon-bleu, the fourth was beef over rice, and the last night was steak. In addition there was usually a dessert baked in a Dutch oven over coals. Kudos to the crew!

A word about the guides: there were three gals and four guys. Jimmi, who was the trip captain, was almost 60, while Chelsea, the youngest, was in her mid-20s. One of the guys was 43 and one of the gals was also in her 40s.

“Free-spirited” would probably be the best way to characterize these people. They are college-educated, fun-loving, love the outdoors, and love the river much like the ski bums love the snow-covered mountains. They



NSA Trail Project Members Improve Portage in The Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area. L-R: Chuck Sheley (CJ-59), Wes Schroeder (MYC-61), Mark Schroeder (Assoc.), Don Havel (FBX-66), Jim Cherry (MSO-57), Ron Thoreson (CJ-60). (Courtesy J. Cherry)

certainly are not in it for the money. It is obviously very difficult to break away from this life.

Who goes on a trip like this? There were Steve and Geri and two teenage boys from Milwaukee; Ben, in his 70s, from Florida; Gary from Tucson, and nephew Austin (the water fight guy) and son, Matt, in his 20s, from New York; David and two grown sons from Globe, Ariz.; Sam and Becca, father and 29-year-old daughter, from Calgary; Jacek, in his 60s, from Florida (funny guy, grew up in Poland, dressed like a Greek merchant); Ernest, in his mid-70s, from Sitka, Alaska, and his pilot son, Eric; Danny, hardware store owner, 50s, from Washington state; Herb and Becky, 50s, from Hershey, Pa. (he is a classical musician and she is a physician – I had many organ/Bach, etc. conversations with him); Dave and Tina, 40s, outdoorsy couple from Redding, Calif.; and, of course, J.B., and the writer.

To go on a trip like this, it is necessary to rough it a bit. On a couple of windy days, the sand would grind on your teeth. The bathroom part is challenging and amusing. Modesty is not a virtue on a Grand Canyon rafting trip. 'nuff said. The upside is good company, great food, awesome scenery, and little bit of living on the edge.

As I wrote, there were 23 guests on the trip. Thirteen of us were scheduled to walk out to the South Rim and 13 people would be walking down to do the second half of the trip with the remaining 10 people.

We rose a little earlier than usual the morning of Thursday, June 3, and prepared for the walkout on the Bright Angel Trail. We camped a few miles from the drop-off point, and two boats were dispatched to take all the hikers to the beginning point. J.B. and I eventually got our stuff together and hit the road about 7:45, carrying about 25 pounds apiece.

A word or two about the Bright Angel Trail: the trail is the most traveled one in the canyon. It is probably most famous for the mule rides to the Phantom Ranch and back to the rim. The ranch is a place to stay, sleep, and eat, a third of a mile north of the river – to stay there you need reservations years in advance.

The distance from the Phantom Ranch to the rim is about 10 miles. Our river people got us a little closer so our distance was almost eight miles with a vertical climb of 4,600 feet.

The history of the trail suggests that the Indians used it for hundreds of years, and the first white settlers used it as early as the late 1800s. Fortunately there are three places where water is available; otherwise, given the heat, we would have probably had to pack an extra gallon of water (another eight pounds).

The trail is a good, wide trail in most places. The traffic on the Bright Angel is very heavy. The uphill climb is relentless – dumb comment; what else can you expect

when you have 4,600 feet to gain?

The heat of the summer only adds to the difficulty of the hike. The temperatures of Phoenix and Las Vegas are generally proxies for the bottom of the canyon. Gaining the 4,600 vertical feet does help with the heat. We were lucky – the high temperature on our hike-out day in Phoenix was 93; on the next day the high was 103, and two days later it was 108.

This writer held in pretty well, but certainly did not set any records. The last mile and one-half was pretty torturous. Nevertheless, I stumbled across the finish line about 2:20. The first thing I did was to find the Bright Angel Lodge Lounge where I drank a huge draft of beer and four cups of iced water.

After all the warnings from our river people to drink copious amounts of water, after all the warning signs on the trail, and all of the warnings I have read over the years, it was obvious that I still did not drink nearly enough.

From there it was spending the night in Tusayan (little town by the South Rim), flying the next day to Las Vegas on Vision Air (bet you've never heard of it), spending Friday night in Las Vegas, and home on Saturday just in time to be whisked to granddaughter Allison's dance recital. 🦋

The Story Behind The Cover Photo

by **Mark Corbet** (LGD-74)

The cover photo of two FS-10 parachutes hanging over Hells Canyon was taken as the first of ten La Grande Smokejumpers headed to the Steamboat Creek fire on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest June 28, 1976. **Mark Lewis** (LGD-75) took the shot.

The two jumpers in the picture are **Kurt Werst** (LGD-74) and **Chuck Kase** (LGD-74). The view is looking north with Idaho on the right and Oregon on the left. The fire was about two acres in size and burning in a small patch of ponderosa pine. All ten landed with no problems in a nearly level patch of open grass, just below the fire and 2400 feet above the river. Twenty-four hours later, with the fire contained and mop up nearly complete, the jumpers were flown off the fire by helicopter and a helitack crew took over.

Jumpers on this fire were Kurt Werst, Chuck Kase, Mark Lewis, **Ted Taylor** (RAC-75), **Jerry Williams** (RAC -72), **Mike Henbest** (LGD -74), **Rick Barnes** (LGD -74), **Mark Corbet** (LGD -74), **Ken Watson** (LGD -74) and **Howard Cooper** (RAC -73). 🦋



Sounding Off from the Editor



by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

The Role of a U.S. Forest Service Academy in Restoring the Forest Service

*Originally published in the Summer
2010 issue "OldSmokeys Newsletter."*

Guest Editorial by Les Joslin

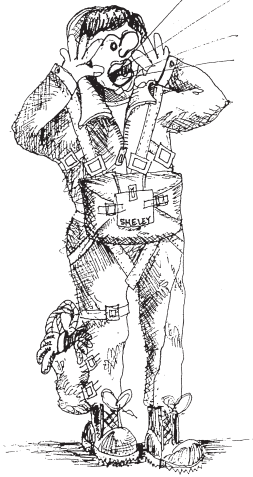
FEW WOULD DISPUTE the notion that the National Forest System and the U.S. Forest Service are impaled on the horns of a dilemma of dysfunction. On one horn is the lack of a clear-cut role for the national forests and grasslands. On the other is the lack of a clear-cut mandate for an agency to efficiently and effectively manage those lands.

The role of the National Forest System, of course, is a matter of law. Indeed, of laws—too many and often conflicting laws. Evolution of a clear-cut role for the national forests is as critical as it would be complicated. I would depend on a successful agency- and stakeholder-supported legislative

review and revision that could result in a more workable set of laws that would facilitate more effective definition of that role and implementation of rules.

Whatever the role of the National Forest System, a viable U.S. Forest Service would be one with a well-defined mission implemented by leaders who lead effectively and followers learning to lead effectively—a professional corps of line and staff officers with field savvy and agency panache who understand and practice the art and science of rangers, supported by rather than controlled by appropriate technologies; a corps that capitalizes on rather than squanders its proud heritage, and attracts rather than alienates those who would serve in it rather than just work for it; a corps worthy of the admiration and respect and support of the National Forest System citizen-owners who should be served and would be served by it.

Where would we get such a corps? The functional U.S. Forest Service of yore grew its own corps of forest officers—dedicated professionals and technicians—on mostly rural or remote ranger districts on which the district ranger depended on each and every member of his small crew to ride for the brand and pull his or her weight to “get it done” together. Generations of Forest Service professionals and technicians learned the ropes in the field on such ranger districts. Most such ranger districts have been lost to lumping and urbanization and



cultural change.

Without such ranger districts offering such formative experiences—experiences unavailable now and in the future unless the lumped districts of today were split into smaller entities approximating the practical scale and functions of the past—the Forest Service would have to train qualified men and

women selected to serve as forest officers at a special institution. This should be a national, residential, U.S. Forest Service Academy, situated on a national forest in the West that could accommodate and provide—and, incidentally, materially benefit from—a wide range of rigorous student experiences. This academy would comprise an entry-level officer candidate course and a mid-career advanced course.

At the officer candidate school, those recruited to be the line and staff professionals and leaders of the Forest Service would learn to be forest officers first and specialists in one or more disciplines—in which they already would have academic degrees or significant experience—second. The challenging course would inspire the will and develop the physical and practical and philosophical wherewithal of



Les Joslin

a corps of professional and technical members—not employees, but members—who would be the able and willing and dedicated forest officers required by the Forest Service. After significant career assignments and experience, these forest officers could return to the academy for mid-career training to further their preparation for district ranger and senior line as well as staff assignments. The academy would be an intellectual and cultural wellspring of the Forest Service, an institutional home of the resolve and resourcefulness the Forest Service needs to succeed at its mission.

Audacious? You betcha! Expen-

sive? You betcha! But certainly not too expensive for a U.S. Government that allocates hundreds of billions of dollars to rescue Wall Street and spends over \$2 billion (in 1997 dollars) per copy for B-2 Spirit stealth bombers. In fact, the entire U.S. Forest Service Academy could be established and operated for a decade or two for half the cost of just one of those bombers. Isn't investment in the future administration of the National Forest System and all the benefits derived by its citizen-owners in terms of commodity and amenity resources as well as jobs in more stable communities worth at least that much?

Impossible? Only if we admit it

is and give up.

*And the sighing of the pines, up here near the timberline,
Makes me wish I'd done things different,
but wishin' don't make it so.*

Let's hope that, fifty years from now, those plaintive lines from Ian Tyson's song *Fifty Years Ago* aren't the chorus of the U.S. Forest Service Hymn. 🌲

Les Joslin is a retired U.S. Navy commander and a former U.S. Forest Service firefighter, wilderness ranger, and staff officer. He writes and teaches from his Bend, Oregon, home. He can be reached at: lesjoslin@aol.com

I want to thank the generous donors who contributed to our annual fund request the past two years. Your donations allow us to help meet the National Smokejumper Association's Mission and Goals. Because of you and others, we're able to help other smokejumpers, pilots and their families in need, preserve our history, help protect our federal public lands, track and record your whereabouts, and support the current smokejumper program. I appreciate your willingness to give.

—John Twiss, NSA President

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For Jerry Dixon, The Dancing Never Stopped

by Doug Abromeit (McCall '71)

I first laid eyes on Jerry Dixon (MYC-71) in 1971. I was in McCall smokejumper rookie training, lying face-down in the dirt with sweat rolling off my forehead and into my eyes with Neil Satterwhite (MYC-65) standing above me, yelling: "Okay, Puke, now give me 25 more."

Satterwhite, of course, was referring to push-ups.

I was trying to summon the juice to do exactly as I was told because Satterwhite – who could do 20 one-armed push-ups and spoke with a gravelly growl that emitted

from his throat at the same point a Viet Cong shell had ripped away his larynx – was undoubtedly the toughest human being I had run across in my sheltered life.

That's when Dixon appeared. I looked up and saw this guy running across the field toward Del Catlin (MYC-47), the base manager.

I looked back down and grunted out 25 shaky, half-assed push-ups for Satterwhite and staggered to my feet. By that time Dixon was gone and I forgot about him. But the next morning there he was again, standing with



L-R: Doug Abromeit and Jerry Dixon August 2009 Pioneer Cabin near Ketchum, Idaho. (Courtesy D. Abromeit)

the rest of us rookies waiting for the trainers to emerge from the loft.

We asked who he was. He said his name was Dixon and that he had been working in Council on the district fire crew and happened to be driving by when he saw us training. He said he stopped his pickup, ran over to Catlin and told him he had always wanted to be a smokejumper and could he join the group. "Be here tomorrow," The Cat told him.

He said he stopped his pickup, ran over to Catlin and told him he had always wanted to be a smokejumper and could he join the group.

When the trainers came out, they introduced Dixon and noted that since half our class had been a bunch of wussies and had washed out, they were now forced to take Dixon on. They further noted that while the rest of us were, for the most part, worthless and had learned precious little, we had been at it for a week and Dixon would have to suck it up and catch up.

And Dixon's catching up was the best thing that could have happened to the rest of us. Much of the trainers' attention switched to Dixon and away from the rest of us. The trainers took turns having him do Allen rolls out of a moving, bouncing pickup, followed by push-ups; exits off the jump tower, followed by push-ups; and letdowns, followed by push-ups.

I remember Dixon being so tired he would drag himself into the cafeteria and eat, and then stagger up to the barracks and sleep. We called him Mattress Back and marveled that he didn't quit.

And he didn't; he was back every morning with his cocky "Cool Hand Luke" swagger ready to take everything that was thrown his way. At the end of the training sufferfest, the trainers, all of whom secretly admired Dixon's verve, announced he would be allowed to join the rest of us and make the seven practice jumps required to be a smokejumper.

The fifth or sixth practice jump was the packout jump. We jumped, and then the spotters dropped cargo that we gathered along with our jump suits, stuffed it all into huge, thick canvas sacks that resembled feedbags for giant horses.

The bags were unwieldy, uncomfortable, bulbous and heavy. Our task was to put these monstrosities on our backs and carry them five tortuous miles back to the jump base in one hour; the trainers, of course, slipped rocks into everyone's bag.

I had been dreading the packout. At 125 pounds, carrying a 110-pound pack sounded next to impossible. Dixon told me: "Hey, don't worry, pal. I'll be there."

And he was. Dixon helped me get the bag on my back and told me I looked like an ant carrying a beetle. Dixon and I were last in line, but I was doing okay until the

trail narrowed as it traversed a steep, rocky slope with a creek at the bottom of it. I slipped off the trail, and the overloaded cylindrical giant and I rolled downslope – thump, thump, thump.

The bag and I finally stopped at the edge of the creek. I was lacerated and had talus-shaped indentations all over my arms and face. I hurt everywhere and figured I was totally screwed.

But then, all of a sudden, there was Dixon saying: "Get your ass up, Abro. We gotta get going."

"Get your ass up, Abro. We gotta get going."

We dragged the bag up the bank, got it onto my back, and off we went. When we got near the finish line at the jump base all our rookie buddies were there and cheering. The trainers were yelling, "You slugs have two minutes to make it." Dixon and I started running – or at least trying to run – and we made it with thirty seconds to spare.

Dixon and I remained very close friends right to the end; we jumped together for several more years, skied in Alaska and Alta too many times to remember, sea kayaked in the Kenai Fjords, rowed the Grand Canyon, and, best of all, told the same stories over and over again and laughed a lot. During those 40 years, Dixon told me repeatedly that the greatest gifts a human can have are good friends and a loving family.

And Jerry had both, but unfortunately neither his many friends nor his loving family could stave off the ravages of ALS – amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease.

And now he's gone, and I'll miss Jerry calling from Alaska, waking me up at 1 o'clock in the morning and yelling: "Abromeit, both feet on the deck. We jump at dawn." Then telling me about some new adventure he had hatched up, like dicing some un-skied line in the Chugach.

That's the spirit that drove Jerry right to the end. During his last six months – despite precipitous physical decline – Jerry climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in February and then, after his local guide told him that his tribe had a proverb that said a man should never stop dancing, he was the only white guy who danced in a Kenyan ceremony at the foot of the mountain.

He skied several days at Sun Valley in April, floated the Grand Canyon in July in 120-degree heat, and drove solo up the Alaska-Canadian Highway in August. I talked to Jerry a few days before he died, and he told me,

Teaser Insert: "remember, pal, never stop dancing."

"Abro, I've had a life blessed with a loving family and great friends, and Janet and you are two of them. I wish you all the best for all time and remember, pal, never stop dancing."

All the best to you, Jerry; we all know you'll never stop dancing. 🌲



Will Tanner (Associate)



Tom Carlsen (MSO-70)



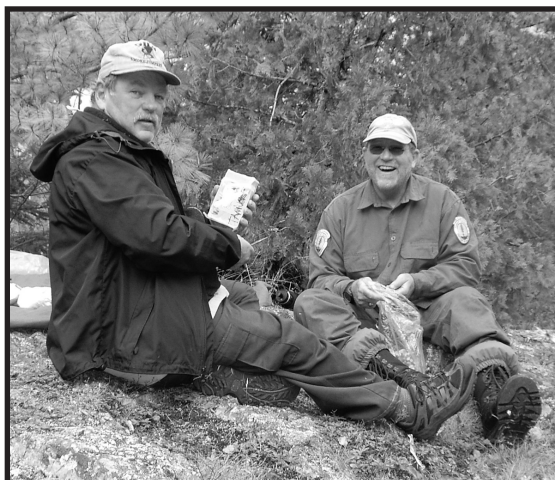
Minnesota Trail Project 2010

Boundary Waters Wilderness Canoe Area

Photo's Courtesy Ron Baylor (MSO-58)



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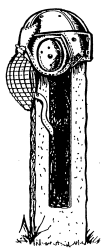
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Total funds dispersed to smokejumpers and families since 2004 – \$12,300

**Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contributions to:
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Wichita, KS 67226-2526

Norman C. “Norm” Knapp (Missoula ’47)

Norm, 87, died Oct. 15, 2010, in Aurora, Colorado. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1940 and, based at Pearl Harbor, he was deployed to the South Pacific as part of Marine Fighter Squadron VMF-123 during World War II. During his service Norman advanced to the rank of sergeant major, youngest to achieve this rank at the time. After the war, Norm moved to Missoula, where he entered the University of Montana. He jumped from Missoula for just the 1947 season. Finding school to be increasingly challenging, he joined the Missoula City Fire Department. Norm completed his studies in 1950 with a degree in geology.

Norm went to work for the Army Corps of Engineers’ Oahu Dam Project on the Missouri River. Mobil Oil hired him as a petroleum geologist, and he worked in Montana, North Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma and Colorado. He had 33 years of service with the company.

Mitchell R. “Mitch” Ruska (McCall ’63)

Mitch, 67, died Oct. 29, 2010, in McCall. Upon graduating from McCall High School in 1961, he took a job with the U.S. Forest Service, then trained to become a smokejumper in 1963. He enlisted in the Army in 1965, serving honorably in Korea with the 1st Cavalry, 2nd Division. He returned to jumping in McCall for the 1967-69 seasons before injuring his knee. Mitch took a job at the Port of Entry and later attended the state’s police academy, from which he was hired as a state trooper. He earned the nickname “The Mad Russian” from truckers due to his stern enforcement of highway laws; he once stopped three trucks at one time. He developed the “Just Say No” drug prevention program along with the McCall Optimist Club.

Richard “Dick” Peltier (Missoula ’46)

Dick, 85, died March 30, 2010, in Kalispell, Montana. He attended Lincoln County High School in Eureka, Montana, quitting at 17 to join the Army when World War II broke out and served as a paratrooper. He was a part of the peace treaty ceremony between the U.S. and Japan in 1945. Dick worked with a mule

pack train in the Swan Valley in the 1950s. He later moved to Libby, Montana, where he was employed as a logger and bulldozer operator for the J. Neils Lumber Company. He jumped at Missoula in 1946-48.

Monte Brooks (McCall ’48)

Monte, 82, died Dec. 19, 2010, in Boise. He attended Boise schools and earned his business degree at the University of Idaho in 1953. After graduating from high school, Monte spent 1945-47 in the Army Air Corps, stationed in the Aleutian Islands. He owned Brooks Insurance in Boise. Monte jumped at McCall in 1948-51. He became an ardent wildlife conservationist, volunteering for the Idaho Fish and Game Department and the Idaho Conservation League. He also contributed heavily to Boise State University’s expansion of its athletic program from a junior college to its top-tier status today and served as president of the Bronco Athletic Association.

Bernard Nielsen (McCall ’47)

Bernie, 84, died Dec. 14, 2010, in Boise. Following graduation from Kuna High School in 1944, Bernie served in the Army Air Corps for two years, spending the last 10 months in Guam. He attended Boise Junior College – now Boise State University – where he played quarterback for the football team in the 1947 and 1948 seasons. He jumped from McCall in 1947-50, after which he worked as a lineman for Mountain Bell Telephone Company, retiring in 1984.

Robert “Bob” Steiner (Boise ’71)

Bob, 61, died Dec. 14, 2010, in McCall. He worked as a Hotshot in 1968-70 before jumping from Boise in 1971-74 and Fairbanks in 1975. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Montana after attending Missoula schools. Bob spent four years flying for different air companies in Alaska before becoming a captain for Federal Express, from which he retired in 2008.

Neil Satterwhite (McCall ’65)

Neil, 67, died January 7, 2011, in Pocatello, Idaho.

He earned a degree from Idaho State University in 1966 after serving in student government and the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity, as well as the ROTC Student Battalion commander. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Field Artillery Corps, completed officer basic training in Oklahoma, and attended Airborne and Ranger training at Ft. Benning, Georgia. After his initial assignment to the 101st Airborne Division, Neil fought in Vietnam in 1967 as a forward artillery observer and participated in the 1968 Tet Offensive. He was critically wounded by a mortar blast in February 1968, and underwent 18 months of rehabilitation in Tacoma, Washington. Neil received a medical discharge in 1969 with a promotion to the rank of captain. He then enrolled at the University of Arizona and completed a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation. This also allowed him to resume smokejumping, which he had done in McCall in 1965 and 1966. He jumped from McCall during 1969-73 and 1975, then from Boise in 1976 and 1977. Neil worked professionally at Idaho Rehabilitation Services in Pocatello, then established a halfway home and counseling center for young adults in Carson City, Nevada. He returned to Pocatello to work as a counselor at Idaho State's College of Technology. He was a strong supporter of area Special Olympics and veterans organizations and a Life Member of the NSA.

William H. "Bill" Roberts, Jr. (Cave Junction '58)

Bill, 74, died Dec. 12, 2010, in Medford, Ore. He graduated from Shasta College after also attending Mexico City College. Bill saw action in the Korean War as a member of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, then put this experience to work as a civilian, jumping at Cave Junction in 1958. Bill was an avid motorcyclist, competing in the Catalina Grand Prix in 1957 and the Big Bear Classic in 1958. Following retirement from the Medford School District, he took 27 overseas trips.

Scott Hudson (Boise '79)

Scott, 53, died from cancer January 2, 2011, in South Lake Tahoe, California. He graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, joining the staff at Tahoe Valley Elementary School in 1985 as a fourth grade teacher. He went on to become the elementary physical education specialist from 1989 through 2003, then teaching PE at South Tahoe Middle School since 2004. Scott trained at Boise, the final year it was a U.S. Forest Service base, and jumped from McCall 1980-82 and 1984. He also organized and coached the South Tahoe High School Nordic ski team and was an accomplished

rock climber. One of his proudest achievements was running the 100th Boston Marathon in 1996.

Richard "Dick" Anderson (Missoula '46)

Dick, 87, died Oct. 18, 2010, in Hailey, Idaho. He earned a bachelor's degree in forest management from the University of Idaho in 1949 and a master's degree in forestry in 1953, having studied math, physics and engineering at Long Beach (California) City College before entering the Army Air Corps in 1943. While in the service, he was a B-24 tailgunner in Italy and took part in more than 50 missions targeting refineries and marshaling yards in southern Europe. He parachuted to safety after his plane was shot down in northern Yugoslavia. Dick worked as a snow ranger in Alta, Utah, from 1955 to 1965, and spent several summers building timber-access roads in Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming. He also worked as a timber sales administrator in roadless areas. He served as a forest ranger in Idaho from 1965 to 1980. Dick trained as a smokejumper in Missoula in 1946, finishing his stint after the 1947 season. After retirement, he built a 50,000-board-foot house in Hailey, also cultivating fruit trees as well as an indoor orange tree that never failed to produce, even in Idaho's winters. 🌲

Wings Of An Eagle

by Hal Meili (Cave Junction '52)

He split from the cliff, dropping without drift
through thunderheads below.
As if by recoil, through clouded turmoil,
he trapped its upward flow.

Shot aloft by an erupting trough, he mastered the sky.
Scanning terrain o'er his domain with telescopic eye.

Spotting prey through stratus gray, bolting to his quarry
With white bald head and talons spread,
he ruled the territory.

When he screeches – airscaping beaches,
it triggers inspiration.
Proud 'n' free, ranging sea to sea,
he's the symbol of our nation.

High overhead, with wings widespread,
soars "A Smokejumper's Dream."
It swells his heart, that prideful part,
whenever the eagle screams.

Forest Service Evaluates Ram-Air Canopies

by Mark Belitz (West Yellowstone '01)

For three years the U.S. Forest Service Region 1 Smokejumpers, with the help of the BLM Smokejumpers, have been increasing the number of individuals who are jumping the Ram-Air system. Currently Region 1 has 22 individuals actively jumping the system.

During fall 2010, the Region 1 Smokejumpers reached another goal of using their knowledge of the DC-7 Ram-Air canopy to evaluate other Ram-Air canopies: the Eiff Classic, the Eiff Pro, and the CR360.

The purpose was to gain enough knowledge of the Ram-Air canopy to evaluate all canopies available for the smokejumper mission.

From the conception of the Region 1 Smokejumper Ram-Air program, it was never the intent to adopt the BLM canopy or system. Rather, the purpose was to gain enough knowledge of the Ram-Air canopy to evaluate all canopies available for the smokejumper mission. The BLM has done an excellent job of sharing its knowledge of the Ram-Air system, and they continued their support by leading us through their four-phase canopy-evaluation process.

About 10 years ago, the BLM Smokejumpers started systematically recording and documenting the research that goes into evaluating a canopy for the smokejumper mission, and came up with a four-phase evaluation process. The first phase determines if the canopy is safe enough and pertinent for the smokejumper mission.

Many canopies are cut from the program at this phase. Phase 2 places the canopy in tighter jump spots with varying wind conditions and terrain. Smokejumpers with different experience levels will begin to jump



Dan Helterline (GAC-89), outfitted with helmet camera and altimeter, is ready to evaluate the Eiff Pro. (Courtesy Mark Belitz)

the canopy.

Phase 3 of the program evaluates the canopy in smokejumper terrain, on fire jumps and difficult practice-jump spots. Phase 4 requires the canopy to get 1,000 reliable jumps, and only when confidence and reliability are high will the parachute be adopted as a canopy for the smokejumper mission.

The Eiff Classic, the Eiff Pro and the CR360 are in phase 4 of the process, and for three days the Region 1 Smokejumpers were involved in evaluating these canopies. The Eiff Classic and Eiff Pro have several hundred jumps on them and have been jumped for about as many years as the current DC-7 Ram-Air canopy.

Dan Helterline (GAC-89) and I were evaluating the Eiff Pro. With the guidance of the BLM Smokejumpers and our Forest Service logistics, rigging, and support staff following us around like a NASCAR pit crew, we were able to get eight evaluation jumps in three days. These jumps started in a large jump spot, but decreased in size by the third day.

We had beautiful weather and were able to begin by jumping at 6,000 feet. By the second day we jumped at 3,000 feet with no wind into timber and higher winds on a ridge.

My summary for the Eiff Pro is that it is a good canopy for jumping tight timber spots with low wind. The canopy, as compared to the DC-7, has a harder opening shock and a slower turn. The turn rate, although slower, has the ability to pivot more tightly than the DC-7.

The other negative attribute is the noisy slider. Although this seems inconsequential, it should be noted that it does disturb the serene wilderness experience I usually have under canopy – that is, as serene as a jumper can be over a rocky boulder field surrounded by fire.

Jumping and evaluating the Eiff Classic were Mike Fritsen (MSO-95) and Keith “Skid” Wolferman (MSO-

91). They had similar experiences on their Classic canopies; the main difference between the Pro and the Classic being the Pro was modified to have a slightly steeper angle of attack. This increases the descent rate and increases the turning capabilities of the Eiff Pro.

The Eiff receives high rankings for its smooth sink and stall. It has the ability to recover quickly coming out of a stall. With the Eiff, the jumper can maintain a good sight picture while in deep brakes. This is what makes the Eiff a better canopy than the DC-7 when it comes to jumping tight timber jumps with little to no wind.

Although the name implies a round canopy, the CR360 is a Ram-Air canopy with 360 square feet, slightly less material than the 375 square feet on a DC-7. This allows the CR360, as well as the Eiff, to pack easier into the deployment bag (rigging is one of the many items to evaluate in the process).

Evaluators jumping the CR360 included **Bobby Sutton** (MSO-91), **Brian “Rocky” Ahshapanek** (GAC-90) and **Jake Besmer** (MSO-03). All seemed to agree that the CR360 had similar attributes to the DC-7, but it also shines when it comes to the sink and stall characteristics.

Sinking the CR360 takes significantly longer to reach.

A jumper needs to wait a good 5-7 seconds before the canopy will begin to sink. Therefore, if you turn in on final at the same spot as a DC-7 or turn in while not in a sink, you’ll probably overrun the jump spot.

The stall on the CR360 is not as drastic of a falloff as the DC-7 and is therefore easier to keep a good sight picture of the jump spot while on final approach. With enough training, the CR360 also does well in tight timber jumps with low wind.

My experience of jumping and evaluating the Eiff Pro for three days has convinced me that there are many canopies available that can accomplish the smokejumper mission. An evaluation canopy may have a favorable characteristic and may be specifically what a smokejumper may want, but there is always a tradeoff.

Originally when I started jumping the Ram-Air, smokejumpers would ask what I thought of the system. I always replied that I would choose the DC-7 for a fire jump 90 percent of the time. I would choose the round FS-14 canopy the other 10 percent of the time for tight timber jumps with no wind. Now with more experience in sinking the DC-7 canopy into tight timber jumps and sinking that Eiff Pro into those tight timber jumps, that percentage is shrinking. 🦋

Good Camaraderie, Satisfying Work Overcomes Paddling Against The Wind

by **Scott Belknap** (McCall ’83)

Never could I imagine that one day I would paddle the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with someone else covering my expenses.

This magical place has held me captive now for over 50 years. My love of this unique wilderness is so deep that it prompted me to take my last assignment on the Superior National Forest and retire in Northern Minnesota. Now, thanks to Jim Cherry and the National Smokejumper Association’s TRAMPS program, I am able to give back to the wilderness I so dearly love.

The 2010 Superior Nation-

al Forest projects offered a little something for every skill and fitness level. One option was trail restoration work within day-tripping distance of the Wilderness Canoe Base. The other was a five-day project deep within the wilderness during the peak of the fall hardwood color display. I opted for the five-day project, as this part of the BWCAW was new scenery to me.

Our group of four – including three NSA members, **Ron Baylor** (MSO-58), **Tom “Otto” Carlsen** (MSO-70), me, and Will Tanner, a guide from the Wilderness Canoe Base – launched from Fishhook Island on Seagull Lake en route to

Ogishkemuncie Lake.

The first-day paddle totaled a little over 10 miles and four portages. The route took us through the area affected by the July 4, 1999, BWCAW derecho. Nearly a half-million acres of mature timber was mowed down by this straight-line windstorm.

In the following years prescribed burns completed by the U.S. Forest Service created a line of protection for the interface area at the end of the Gunflint Trail. During the 2006 fire season on the Superior National Forest, the Cavity Lake Fire ignited by lightning, burned 31,830 acres mostly

through lowdown-littered forests. The prescribed burns along the Gunflint Trail stopped the fire's advance toward structures and private land.

The regeneration begins with fast-growing hardwoods, eventually replaced with red pine, jack pine, white pine, fir, spruce and cedar. While the regeneration in the Cavity Lake burn area is young, it puts on a colorful show in the fall.

Reaching Ogishkemuncie Lake, we selected a beautiful campsite above lake level with a spectacular view of burned and unburned landscape. For the next week this camp served as our base of operations, leaving us a paddle and portage of a lake or two to reach our scenic project area. Our mission was to replace handrails, uprights and cross-member supports on the bridge spanning the beautiful cascading outflow from Agamok Lake to Mueller Lake on the Kekekabic Trail.

The job was easy, as it involved selecting appropriately sized cedar to cut and peel for the three different dimensions required. Once a stockpile of "parts" was prepared, the woodworking artistry of Tom Carlsen came into play. We all had that old smokejumper work ethic that was a joy to find still intact, but it was Otto who lent efficiency to the reconstruction process.

We only had three days to work on the bridge since two full days of travel were required to get out and back to Seagull Lake. We were able to complete all the bridge work and start roughing out a portage reroute around a beaver-dam-flooded portion of the Kekekabic Trail near the bridge.

There might have been a sore muscle or two amongst the group during the week, but the campfire stories and food kept us going till the project was complete. Our days were filled with work which

kept us from wetting any fishing lines. That little problem will be corrected on the next project.

The weather during the week was a mix of everything from sunny to breezy to windy to overcast and even a sprinkle or two. Wouldn't you know it that rain would fall steadily the night before our departure? We all know what wet gear on a packout is like, but canoe camping is like car camping, and the portages are short enough that the wet weight is not an issue.

We tried to make good time so that we might get across Seagull Lake before the predicted winds hit the 20- to 25-mph range. We were still in good shape when we launched on Seagull and decided to cross the greatest expanse of the lake on the southern end and use the leeward side of Three Mile Island to shelter us as we paddled north to Fishhook Island.

We were better than halfway across Seagull when the wind-driven waves started to give us a little pause. We fought the broad-side waves another 10 minutes and

finally decided to turn downwind to the bottom of Three Mile. We didn't have to paddle going downwind. We only had to steer.

Our strategy to use the island for wind protection worked on the wave action, but since Three Mile Island was prescribe-burned as part of the protection strategy for the Gunflint Trail, we had to paddle into a character-building wind. When we pulled into the Wilderness Canoe Base to a relieved group, our young guide, Will, confessed that he would have parked a lesser group for the night and paddled the remainder the next day. We figured since he said nothing that he was anxious to get us all back to the assisted-living facility.

It was a fabulous week of adventure, satisfying work, friendship and canoeing. Ron vowed he would not come back next year unless Otto came, and Otto said he wouldn't miss it for the world.

Mark next year's BWCAW project down on your "do not miss" list for a very different wilderness experience. 🐾



Four members of the Idaho City unit (64-67) together as they joined to support Bobby Montoya at the funeral of his Mother in October 2010. L-R: At the Pinos Alto Cemetery north of Silver City, NM, Bobby Montoya, Tony Beltran, Benny Ortiz and Francis Mohr. (Courtesy F. Mohr)



The B-17 used in the movie has been restored to its original WW II configuration and is on display at the Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville, Oregon. (Courtesy T. Beltran)

They Flew To Save James Bond

by Tony Beltran (Idaho City '69)

It was 1966 and I was enjoying my last day and a half before I reported to Fort Bliss, Texas, for Army Basic Training. I was sitting in one of those old-style, opera house-sized theaters in El Paso watching the movie "Thunderball." It was the last few minutes of the movie, and 007 and a team of Navy SEALs had just dispatched the bad guys in an underwater battle.

The villain, a madman named Largo, escaped in his yacht. 007 climbed on board and kicks the stuffing out of the crew, while Bond's female interest (for the movie moment) spear-guns the villain. Bond and this love interest, Domino, jump overboard and the yacht hits some rocks and explodes.

Wow! Bond is in a pickle. He has quite a few miles to make it to shore and now has the added responsibility of this "Bond Girl" (as they were known in the 60s).

Not to worry, James – out of the clear blue, western sky comes an Intermountain Aviation B17.

Not to worry, James – out of the clear blue, western

sky comes an Intermountain Aviation B17, rigged for personnel pickup with the Fulton Skyhook System. At the controls are pilot **Dave Schas** (MYC-48) with co-pilot Bob Zimmer.

The other four crewmen, manning various positions to execute the pickup, were **Bruce Lehfeldt** (MSO-54) in the nose, **Paul Tag** (MSO-60) on the winch (positioned in the compartment just forward of the Joe-hole), **Ken Hessel** (MYC-58) at the Joe-hole (the jump and observation hole in the floor of the B17) and **Gary Hannon** (MSO-60) in the tail. These former smokejumpers scooped James out of the ocean, allowing him to live to fight another day.

By my count, James Bond is now about 85 years old, living on Viagra, more than 50 multi-vitamins, and vodka martinis (shaken, not stirred). He would never have made it were it not for the fearless crew and pilots of the Skyhook B-17.

Now, as Paul Harvey used to say, "the rest of the story." First, let me say that in 1966, I didn't know this was an Intermountain Aviation venture. As I later learned, the Skyhook rigged B-17 and crew were simply leased to the movie producer to provide James with an avenue of escape from certain death. The twist

comes from the fact that the crew was told to avoid any media events that might occur, lest it slip out that, in some circles, Intermountain was said to have ties to the CIA.

Now, back at the movie set – a barge off Key Largo in the Florida Keys.

Okay, it wasn't really Sean Connery and Claudine Auger who got plucked out of the ocean by the B-17, but two life-sized dummies (Bond holding the woman in front of him) that were finally winched into the tail of the aircraft. "Finally," the dummies were onboard after multiple "reel them in, let them out, reel them in" commands from a chase plane that was filming the pickup.

Now here is where the real daring-do started: The plane, on its way back to West Palm Beach, Fla., declared an emergency. The right landing gear wouldn't come down. The four crewmembers located the hand crank and proceeded to manually lower the landing gear. This procedure took a while, but finally the gear locked into place.

By this time the dreaded news media had heard (via scanner) that a weird-looking B-17 was about to land at the West Palm Beach airport. (In 1965, any B-17 in the air would be an oddity, I think, not to mention one with a Skyhook yoke attached to its nose.)

Upon landing, the crewmen were directed to get the dummies out of the tail of the plane and make themselves scarce. They were more than happy to do this as media folks were beginning to show up on the ramp. Robert Fulton, inventor of the Skyhook system, was at the airport – fortunately – to head them off and field their questions as the crew disappeared.

Another point of interest, maybe, was the fact that Fulton flew a World War II P-51 fighter everywhere he went. It was sitting at the airport, also.

I was privileged to see an old, grainy 8-millimeter film of the event with the four smokejumpers – Hessel, Tag, Hannon and Lehfeldt – removing the dummies from the plane. When you first see the dummies in the film, just their bare legs are protruding from the tail of the aircraft. Only the upper half of the dummies could be winched into the plane because they were in a sitting position when picked up out of a raft.

They took a double take on the strange-looking B-17 with two sets of bare legs sticking out of the tail.

The dummies, clad only in scanty swimsuits, which you can't really see, look to be in an exotic Kama Sutra position to the wonderment of all. To people driv-

ing along the highway on the other side of the airport fence, one can only imagine what thoughts were going through their heads as they took a double take on the strange-looking B-17 with two sets of bare legs sticking out of the tail.

In fact, Ken said that there was a significant traffic jam developing over there by the time Mr. Fulton arrived to take on the media. In the film, the four crewmen all appear with big smiles as if minutes before they had not faced a serious landing emergency.

So, the airplane returned to its home base in Marana, Ariz., but the story doesn't end here. On the downwind leg of the approach into Marana, at night via Picacho Peak, a turbo charger, oil pan fire ignited on the right inboard engine.

The four crewmembers donned their parachutes, just in case. Ken surmises that people driving on Interstate 10 between Tucson and Phoenix must have had a great view of a ball of fire slowly descending into the desert – no doubt wondering what the hell that was!

Pilot Schas told the crew not to worry: "Boys, hang tough. We're going to make it." They could all see the runway lights at the Intermountain base and know it was only minutes until they were on the ground – one way or another. At this point, jumping was not an option because of altitude, and if the truth were known, nobody was too anxious to jump into that cactus country at night, anyway.

In an interview about these white-knuckle events, Ken told me that as soon as the plane touched down and slowed on roll out, he was determined to exit the aircraft thru the Joe-hole. The plane, with the engine still burning brightly, landed safely. Ken, sitting on the edge of the Joe-hole watching the tarmac pass under his dangling feet, grossly underestimated the speed of the roll out and left the aircraft way too soon.

This serious miscalculation, of course, resulted in him being launched 10 or 20 feet through the air on contact with the pavement – kinda like a tennis ball being served up. As it turned out, the launch was probably a fortunate thing as it got him clear of the tail wheel – a risk that had occurred to him, but apparently had no effect on his decision-making.

Miraculously – thanks to a tried-and-true Allen roll of all Allen rolls, and a lot of luck – he came to a stop unscathed, and was on his feet in time to see Hannon exit the aircraft through the crew door on the right rear side of the fuselage. This exit also resulted in a pretty fair catapult, according to Ken, but one not nearly as spectacular as his. The bottom line – nobody got hurt.

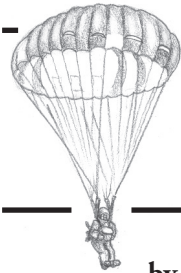
When the plane finally rolled to a stop, who should appear out of the night in a pickup truck but Intermountain CEO **Gar Thorsrud** (MSO-46). Gar and

sidekick **Roland “Andy” Andersen** (MSO-52) arrived on the scene with a flight-line fire extinguisher, and with the help of the rest of the crew – who also lost no time exiting the aircraft in various ways – put the fire out. Thus ended the rescue mission of 007.

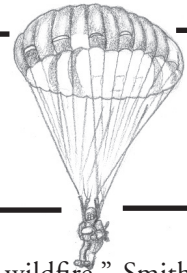
In retrospect, it’s interesting that this movie stunt was conducted in one take and conducted no differ-

ently than a “real world” mission. In today’s movie world, computer graphics depict what is seen as too dangerous or too expensive to create “real world.”

To the pilots and recovery crew of the B-17 during the summer of 1965, it was demonstrated once again that the Fulton Skyhook was a viable rescue system. What an adventure! 🧑‍🚀



Odds and Ends



by **Chuck Sheley**

Congratulations and thanks to **Bill Long** (CJ-55), **Bob Smee** (MSO-68), and **Steve Anderson** (MSO-63) who just became our latest Life Member(s). Thanks to the Redding Reunion Committee who honored **Bob Kersh** (Assoc.) and **Dick Tracy** (MSO-53) with Life Memberships for their contribution to smokejumping in Region 5.

A summary of an article originally published in the Whittier (Calif.) *Daily News*, Oct. 12, 2010: Despite serving as a smokejumper for only one season, **Rachel Smith** (MSO-00) is extremely well-versed in firefighting protocol ... having been fighting fires since age 17.

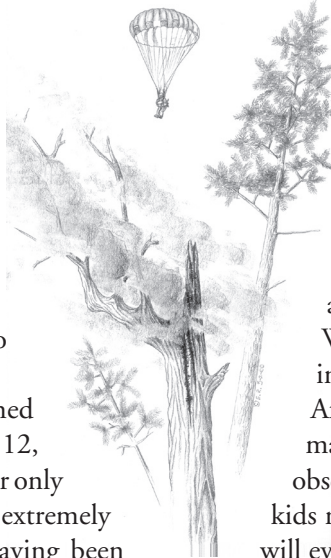
She’s so well-versed that she created a non-profit organization, Firescaping, which provides resources to communities interested in protecting property from wildfire. She offers free information about local fire-safe councils and home preparation on its website, www.firescaping.org.

Smith’s efforts got the attention of the National Fire Protection Agency, which invited her to join a committee to develop professional wildland firefighter standards. Those standards are model codes adopted by fire agencies worldwide and are set for publication in 2012.

Currently, Smith makes a monthly commute to the University of California in Berkeley, where she’s studying for a doctorate in environmental science, policy and management.

Smith – also a fire ecologist – researches ways to reduce fire threats in communities. She also facilitates meetings to help those at risk of fire in their area to get informed, prepared and involved.

“Whether you’re short on time or are on a tight budget, there are plenty of things you can do to



prepare your home for wildfire,” Smith said.

Karl Brauneis (MSO-77): “Hi Chuck, outstanding editorial! You nailed it. Wyoming is a right-to-work state, so many of our kids are just plain tough. I would put some of our 14-year old cowboys up against anyone. Last year we went to the Mountain West Conference Track & Field Championships in Fort Collins, Colorado, to watch Keith run. After the meet my wife and daughter went to the mall and shopped. I walked around the place and observed. The kids were beyond fat. Those kind of kids need to miss meals and starve before the light will ever come on.”

Gayle Morrison (Associate): “I just signed a book contract with Texas Tech University for *Hog’s Exit*, the story about **Jerry Daniels** (MSO-58). You know it’s been a LONG time in the making. The book won’t be available until spring 2012, so you’ll have to wait another year to see it.”

John Culbertson (FBX-69): “Your *Sounding Off from the Editor* was the best ever. This piece transcends all management concepts in the natural resource agencies, Department of Labor, and Department of Education combined. It should be read on the floor of the Senate and in Congress. I hope there is some way that this piece can move up the line to a point where it might have some effect on the agencies. My hat is off to you for a fine editorial.”

On August 5, 2008, the crash of a Carson Helicopters Sikorsky S-61N killed nine firefighters being flown from the Iron Complex Fires. In news reports being released today (12/8/10), the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said that “Carson intentionally altered documents to exaggerate the helicopter’s performance capabilities in order to win a Forest Service contract.” The board said that the helicopter weighed

19,008 pounds at takeoff, but the maximum weight to lift was 18,445 pounds. If USFS safety guidelines were followed, the weight would not have exceeded 15, 840 pounds.

Seven of the firefighters were from Grayback Forestry, founded by **Mike Wheelock** (CJ-76) and **Ray Osipovich** (CJ-73).

Harold Hartman (CJ-65): "Your editorial in the last *Smokejumper* was so good. Best I've seen on the subject! If our entire society could just have an idea, we actually could change things for the better."

Barry Reed (MSO-60): "Chuck, thank you for the wonderful job that you do for the NSA. Each issue seems to get better and better. I especially enjoyed the story by Ross Parry and the Higgins Ridge Fire.

"During rookie and refresher training, each person had a canvas jumpsuit that we wore for our practice jumps, and we used the nylon jumpsuit for the fire jumps. **Ted Nyquist** (MSO-54) was a squadleader in 1961. His nylon suit burned up on one fire and his canvas suit burned up on another fire and no more were available.

"Using smokejumper common sense, he 'borrowed' Oscar, the dummy's suit and helmet. Oscar's suit was made for a person who weighed at least 230 pounds, and Ted weighed about 145 soaking wet. Ted waddled around like a duck wearing that one. Since Oscar was normally on display for tours next to the parachute tower, Ted covered him up with a sheet.

"Unfortunately, **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40) did not know of these circumstances and was giving a personal tour for some bigwigs from Washington, D. C. Earl's exact words were: 'This is what we look like when we jump out of airplanes.' Earl grabbed the sheet and jerked it off. Man, Earl was pissed!"

Bob Crowe (MSO-46): "I received the January issue of *Smokejumper*, looked at the cover, and remembered that the last time I looked like that was 61 years ago on our way to a fire in Idaho.

"I was second on the squadleader jump list that day and **Bill Hellman** (MSO-46) was first. Five p.m. came and Hellman left the base (to go home). A moment later an 8-man fire call came in for a fire near Pierce, Idaho. I took the crew to Pierce. Hellman took the fire the next day - Mann Gulch."

Ross Parry (MSO-58): "A short thank you for your perseverance in publishing my Higgins Ridge Fire story. I have received some positive responses to the article. Also wanted to express my support to your editorial commenting on the work ethic of our youth."

After 39 fire seasons, **Doug Gochnour** (BOI-74) has retired from the Forest Service as the Forest Supervisor of the Malheur NF. "I started on an engine crew

the week I graduated from high school and spent the first half of my career in various fire jobs. It's been a great ride, but now it's time to catch a few more fish and make a few birdies on the golf course."

Luke Birky (MSO-45): "I trained at Nine Mile in the spring of 1945. Our training squad included two men who were in the military (I am sorry, but I cannot recall the names of either one right now). We were not given a great deal of information, but they were to receive jumper training for use in the military. One was a sergeant, the other, a major. The major was a physician. Later in the summer, we learned that the doctor died. After he left Missoula, he was up in one of the Dakotas and did some kind of training jump into a lake. There apparently was enough wind that he was not able to collapse his chute and he drowned. Our squad was pretty sad."

Myron Tollison (MYC-66): "I am retiring from my work with Farm Bureau Insurance Companies after 33 years." *Congratulations, Myron.*

Gayle Morrison (Associate): "Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the January 2011 magazine. I was deeply moved by so many interesting and heartfelt stories and tributes about **Al Dunton** (FBX-67). I never knew the man, but wish I had. Those who wrote about him clearly took the time to craft fine eulogies in the great jumper tradition of wit and affection. Having all of them appear together in one edition of the magazine made for some powerful reading. I know it takes as much thought and effort to edit, organize and sequence the tributes as it does to write them. This was a particularly special edition in a long line of fine editions. Thanks, Chuck!"

Bill Cramer (NIFC-90): "Jedidiah Lusk died last night (Jan. 3) after a 10-month battle with cancer. Please keep his parents, Scott (FBX-81) and Cynthia (RAC-87,) and his siblings, Jessica and Justin, in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time."

Jim Clatworthy (MSO-56) in a note with his Good Sam Fund donation to NSA Treasurer, **Charlie Brown** (IDC-56): "I was saddened to see the obit for **Dave Barnhardt** (MSO-56). I'd lost track of him when he shipped over to Vietnam. We had some great times in Missoula with **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) between fires. Then Dave hitched a ride with me and a lookout, who were driving back to Michigan."

Luke Birky (MSO-45) and **Dick Flaharty** (MSO-44) are among the WWII conscientious objectors interviewed and featured by author Kevin Grange in the winter edition of *National Parks* magazine.

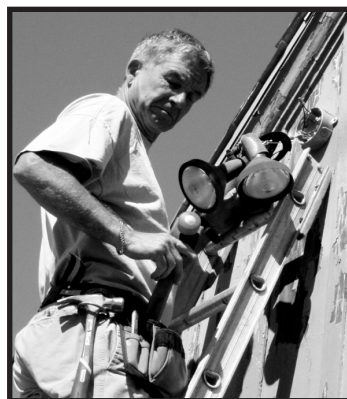
Laura Nielsen, wife of **Bernie Nielsen** (MYC-47), wishes to thank the smokejumper community for its support in the passing of her husband last December. 🕯



Don Bisson (CJ-78)



Betty Stoltenberg

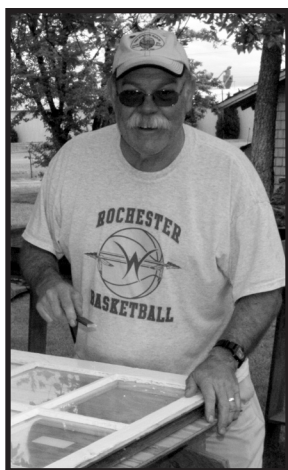


Doug Bucklew (CJ-67)



Gobi Restoration Project 2010

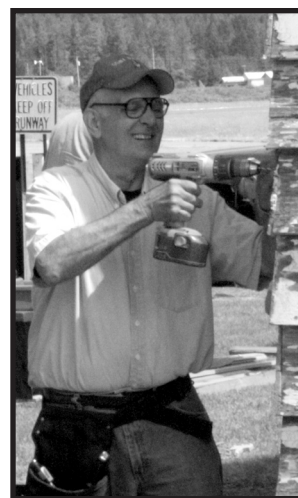
Photo's Courtesy Roger Brandt



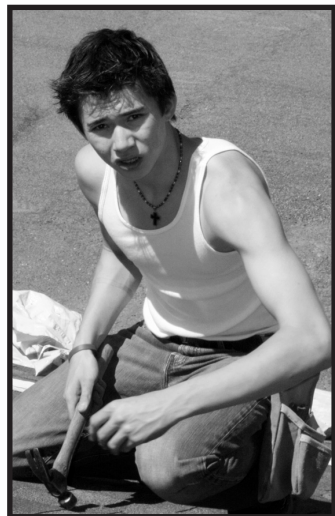
Jerry Katt (CJ-67)



Jim Cherry (MSO-57) & Jimmie Dollard (CJ-52)



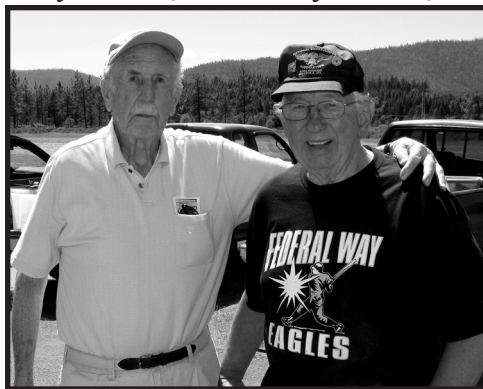
Ron Lufkin (CJ-60)



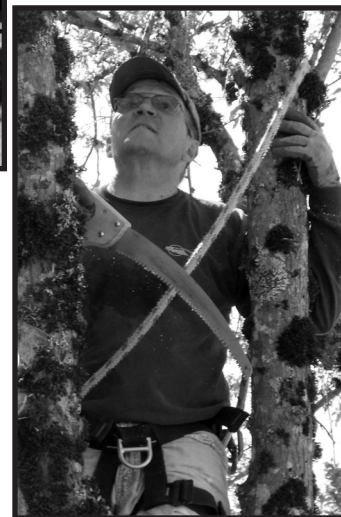
Jim Buck



Garry Peters (CJ-62) & Larry Peters (CJ-62)



Jim Allen (NCSB-46) & Jim Oleson (CJ-53)



Mark Corbet (LGD-74)

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

VA Lists Presumptive Conditions For Claims

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

First, some background: I keep my hand in journalism, a profession I followed for several years, by writing occasional pieces for a regional newspaper. While researching a story a year or so ago on health care available for veterans, I learned that if a person served in any branch of the military and subsequently contracted Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) – also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease – the Veterans Administration presumes that the disease was caused by the strain of military service.

An Army buddy of mine had died of ALS, so I contacted his widow, and she applied for VA assistance. She is now receiving some \$1,200 per month, tax-free, and has other privileges associated with her status as a veteran's survivor.

My friend had served in Vietnam, but service in that nation is not a condition of the VA award. Basically, anyone who served 90 days or more and has a diagnosis of ALS is eligible for VA medical and compensation benefits. There is no time limit on the onset of the disease following military service.

So, a veteran who has died from ALS has a service-connected death and there are benefits for eligible dependents. Even if the veteran passed away years ago, the surviving spouse can file a claim for a service-connected death.

After publication of the piece with this information, I sent it to several smokejumper friends whom I knew to be vets. **Larry Lufkin** (CJ-63) was one of those. He immediately contacted a brother-in-law, **Keith Fitzjarrald** (CJ-62), a Navy veteran who was suffering from ALS. As a result of that contact, his family filed a VA claim for him since his disease was so advanced he was unable to do so himself. Keith was accepted into the system, received medical care and, after he died in May, his widow began receiving her tax-free stipend.

That article also prompted Lufkin to submit an application for VA benefits owing to a heart condition that may be related to his Vietnam service. He's awaiting a decision from the agency.

During my research for the article, I learned there are other diseases the VA presumes to have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange in those who served on the ground in Vietnam or in the Korean Demilitarized Zone

in 1968 and 1969. Lufkin has urged me to publish this information in *Smokejumper* magazine since many of our members are fellow Vietnam and Korea vets. The list of those diseases follows:

Agent Orange Presumptive Conditions Service-Connected Disability Claims

- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancer (cancers of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)
- Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- AL amyloidosis
- Hodgkin's disease
- Chloracne
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (see list of associated terms below)
- Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy
- Porphria cutanea tarda
- Diabetes type II
- Disabilities in the children of a herbicide exposed veteran (see list below)
- Parkinson's disease
- Ischemic heart disease
- B-cell leukemias
- Soft-tissue sarcomas (see list below)

Types of Soft-Tissue Sarcomas

- Adult fibrosarcoma
- Alveolar soft-part sarcoma
- Angiosarcoma
- Clear-cell sarcoma of aponeuroses
- Clear-cell sarcoma of tendons and aponeuroses
- Congenital fibrosarcoma
- Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans
- Ectomesenchymoma
- Epithelioid malignant leiomyosarcoma
- Epithelioid and glandular malignant schwannomas
- Epithelioid sarcoma
- Extraskelatal ewing's sarcoma
- Hemangiosarcoma
- Infantile fibrosarcoma
- Leiomyosarcoma
- Liposarcoma
- Lymphangiosarcoma
- Malignant fibrous histiocytoma

- Malignant giant cell tumor of the tendon sheath
- Malignant glandular schwannoma
- Malignant glomus tumor
- Malignant hemangiopericytoma
- Malignant mesenchymoma
- Malignant ganglioneuroma
- Malignant granular cell tumor
- Malignant leiomyoblastoma
- Malignant synovioma
- Malignant schwannoma with rhabdomyoblastic differentiation
- Proliferating (systemic) angioendotheliomatosis
- Rhabdomyosarcoma
- Synovial sarcoma

Disabilities in the Children of Herbicide-Exposed Veterans

- Spina bifida (except spina bifida occulta)

Examples of Certain Birth Defects in the Children of Female Vietnam Veterans

- Cleft lip and cleft palate
- Congenital heart disease
- Congenital talipes equinovarus (club foot)
- Esophageal and intestinal atresia
- Hallerman-Streiff syndrome

- Hip dysplasia
- Hirschprung's disease (congenital megacolon)
- Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis
- Hypospadias
- Imperforate anus
- Neural tube defects (including spina bifida, encephalocele and anencephaly)
- Poland syndrome
- Pyloric stenosis
- Syndactyly (fused digits)
- Tracheoesophageal fistula
- Undescended testicle
- Williams' syndrome

For a full list of the diseases that may qualify a Vietnam veteran (or that veteran's spouse or widow) for disability compensation and VA health care, go to publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp.

Further, thousands of veterans who served in Korea from April 1968 through July 1969 may have been exposed to the same types of toxic defoliants used in Vietnam. They may also qualify for disability compensation.

For assistance in enrolling in the VA system, contact a county Veterans Service Officer or a VSO at the nearest post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion or Disabled American Veterans. 🇺🇸

Rookie Finds He Has The Stomach For Jumping

by Jack Rowse (Missoula '62)

My first fire was on the side of upper Kintla Lake in Glacier National Park, July 20, 1962. The lake is located in a horseshoe-shaped canyon with the lake level at 4,373 feet. There were 44 jumpers on the fire.

We were jumping out of the DC-2, and the pilot was flying below the ridge tops making circles within the box canyon. We jumped two men on every pass. This meant we were doing a lot of flying in circles, and with the seats out of the DC-2 and us sitting on the floor, all we could see out of the windows was the sky.

I proceeded to get very airsick – I mean VERY airsick. The thought of jumping did not bother me. I just wanted to get out of that airplane with or without a parachute.

There is a rule about jumping that the first-year jumpers always jump second or third, never first. This is because the first man out the door can step out with his right leg first. This turns him counter-clockwise and makes for a very easy opening of the parachute. If the next man out doesn't manage to get his right leg first out the door, he can get jerked around on opening.

I was teamed up with a crusty/

cranky second-year man who did not have much use for me, or anyone else for that matter. I asked him if I could go first on the jump.

His reply: "You know the rules. Second-year men go first," to which I replied, "Well, then, I guess I will just have to throw up on your back." It really is a lot easier to be first out the door.

As luck would have it, I was on a two-man fire with him later; that's another story. .

I have several memories of working the fire. We were carrying two five-gallon cans of chain saw gas at night and were walking

through burning forest floor. Fortunately, fires kind of “go to sleep” at night and we got away with it.

When we were up on the side of the mountain above the lake fighting the fire, we had a grandstand seat of the action from the TBM retardant bombers. They would fly across the lake, make several circles in the box canyon, and come back just above the lake and pull up in a climb to make their drop.

I wished I had a color movie camera because I still have the images of looking down on the black-and-red plane, the green forest, blue lake, and pink retardant

– it was wonderful. I had debated whether to purchase a camera before I joined the jumpers. This pushed me over the edge.

I was asked to man the radio that communicated with the retardant bombers for a few minutes, with the statement that they didn’t expect to have any flying over while I was there.

Well, one showed up and asked where we wanted him to drop his load. At the time all I could manage to say was: “On the fire.” When the radio boss got back, he looked over and saw a spot fire outside the fireline and wanted to

know why the retardant was not dropped on it. That was the last time I manned the radio.

When we left the fire, we hiked with a 60-year-old forest ranger. He had a walking stick and a pack with a bell attached. After a couple of hours of listening to the “ding, ding, ding,” someone asked what he had that stupid bell for.

His reply: “If the grizzly bears hear you coming, they move out of the way.” We got the message. 🐻

Jack can be contacted at 1233 E Krista Way, Tempe, AZ 85284 or ajrouse@msn.com.



A good group of ex-jumpers worked at the Redding Air Attack Base during the 2010 fire season. Their current employer is also listed. L-R: Dan Emry (BOI-78) Phos-Chek, Tim “Dog” Huntington (RDD-77) Phos-Chek, Scott Brockman (RDD-83) Capt. Cal-Fire, Ken Perkins (RDD-77) USFS, Charlie Caldwell (RDD-65) Phos-Chek, Bob Coward (SJ Pilot) DynCorp, Norm “Bake” Baker (RDD-81) USFS Capt. (Courtesy T. Huntington)

The View from Outside the Fence



by Chris Sorensen
(Associate)

GAYLE MORRISON'S (ASSOCIATE) long anticipated book on **Jerry "Hog" Daniels** (MSO-58) is scheduled to be published in April of 2012 by the Texas Tech University Press. The title is "Hog's Exit." Gayle has been working on Jerry's story for a very long time, and she tells me that much work remains to be completed before the book goes to print.

I have always lamented the fact that there is no Ford Trimotor on Display in Missoula. A check of the Museum of Mountain Flying's web site <http://museummountainflying.org/>, (click on projects), reveals that one of the museum's projects is retrieving the Johnson Flying Service Ford Trimotor NC435H from the Big Prairie landing strip deep inside the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This Trimotor was the newest Ford that Johnson Flying Service ever owned and was the first Trimotor that was wrecked by the Johnson Flying Service. The plane was a 5 AT D

and carried serial number 102. Dick Johnson was at the controls, during the 1938 accident, and walked away with a bump on the head. The engines and other parts were salvaged by Johnson after the accident. All that remains are the wing and fuselage, and it appears the fuselage is in two pieces. It will be a monumental task to get the plane out of the wilderness area and an even greater monumental task to restore it.

Rod Benson, an earth science teacher at Helena High School, has produced a virtual tour of Mann Gulch. The web site is: <http://formontana.net/gulch.html>. The photography is excellent and the web site is the kind of quality I would expect from someone trained in the sciences. Included is an audio interview with **Bob Sallee** (MSO-49). Take a look at Rod's web site. You won't be disappointed.

Federal Judge Donald Malloy of Missoula announced in December that he was taking Senior Status (semi-retirement). Judge Malloy has presided over dozens of controversial cases over the years, including the case requiring the Forest Service to complete an Environmental Impact Statement on air tanker operations and retardant. Judge Malloy warned

the Forest Service that "The Federal Defendants are advised that failure to comply with this deadline may subject them to sanctions, including contempt proceedings, and could conceivably result in enjoining the continued use of aerially applied fire retardant until the law enacted by Congress is complied with." This is the no-nonsense Judge who ordered former Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Rey to appear in Court in Missoula to answer contempt of court charges and threatened him with house arrest and electronic monitoring for his failure to comply with Malloy's earlier rulings in a 2003 retardant lawsuit. Whoever replaces Judge Malloy better have a lot of stamina.

If you haven't looked at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base web site, it's well worth your time. The site is packed with photos, movies, slide shows and historical documents. Point your browser to: <http://www.ncsb-smokejumpers.com>.

This column is dedicated to Major General Vang Pao of the Royal Lao Army and **Jedidiah Lusk** (FBX-10) who both left us in early January to take their respective places in smokejumper history. 🕯

Please Tell Us When You Change Your Address

The postal service does *NOT* forward your copy of *Smokejumper* when you move or leave home for an extended time period. It is returned to us and the NSA is charged an additional first class postage fee. With 30-40 returns per mailing it gets expensive and takes a lot of time. Please let Chuck Sheley know if you have any change in your mailing address. His contact information is on page three.